



# COUNTERPARTS

Tương Hữu Đông Nam Á

## SITREP

# 34

Volume II

Issue 4

Spring, 2000

### Reunion Planned for October

Here is the latest on the 2000 COUNTERPARTS Reunion. Note that this is NOT a co-hosted event with our VN affiliates; nevertheless, our former allies are welcome to attend.

#### **Schedule:**

30 September - 1 October 2000  
Double Tree Hotel, Orange, California  
(\$89.00 double occupancy/day)  
John Wayne Airport Shuttle Bus  
(\$10 one way; \$16 round trip)

#### **Agenda:**

##### **Friday, 29 September**

Arrival and Registration  
No-Host Bar and Dutch Treat Dinner

##### **Saturday, 30 September 2000**

0900 - 1400 : Air Force Flight Museum tour  
1200 - Lunch at Hap Arnold Officer/NCO Club or the Riverside Brewery  
1600 - 1800 : General Membership meeting: Report on the Association, New Members and Members in Memoriam, other Association matters.  
1800 - Cocktail Hour  
1900 - No-Host or Hosted Dinner: Presentation of Richard Rezac paintings.

##### **Sunday, 1 October 2000**

0800 - 1000 : Little Saigon visit.  
1200 - Lunch at Vietnamese Restaurant  
1600 - Return to Hotel  
1700 - Dinner for members, counterparts, and other guests, Speaker, Presentation of Awards

#### **Pre-Registration:**

Everyone who intends to participate in the tours and dinners should contact the Coordinator to reserve placement.

#### **Other Recreation:**

Members and their guests may want to arrive Friday, 29 September 2000 or before, and depart Monday, 2 October 2000 or later to enjoy other nearby recreational activities (Disneyland, Sea World, QEII, Hot Rod Museum, etc).

#### **Reunion Coordinator Point of Contact:**

Jon H "Jack" Frost  
3676 Strong Street; Riverside, CA 92501-1814  
909-781-9290 (daytime)

### UPDATE: OPERATION RICELIFT

#### *A Letter From the Highlands*

*(The following was received from Mike and Marion Little.*

*The letter is from Bok Yong, their contact in Pleiku)*

*"Dear Members, Association Meeting. Greeting in the love of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.*

*Thank you for praying and supporting "Operation Rice Lift." May God's blessing with happiness. I'm wonderful to hear of your program to sharing your life to our Bahnar families.*

*Now I invite you to come into my Bahnar people. Our life is rice from ricefield, and vegetable from jungle. But only few month our food last, because ricefield is too high, no water, all stone or rock. Outside our few month food gone, we must my tribe to seek work for Vietnamese for family food five or six month. If you come to Vietnam remember you come to village tribe people. You will see. My people, body thin big head and big stomach...large spleen, monkey face, look like animal, no shirt, loin cloth, no buttocks, with black drying skin....because no food and no medicine to treat.*

*Sometime I crying for my people. So then they call me Cry Uncle. Many village, my people is fasting no food and died no food or die they disease illness no medicine, like leprosy patients. In my family (Bahnar family) some family is fasting now (Yoih, Phiet, Sok, Yot...).*

*Thank you again for your prayer and support to make our dreams come true. Please give our love to everyone. I will stop for now, God bless you.*

*Cry Uncle Bok Yong"*

*"Since this letter was written, Operation Rice Lift funds arrived, and just in time for many. Now they are bringing the harvest, and hopefully, it will be abundant. As for the gifts, the families weaved some beautiful book markers; there are 3 versions.1) USA BAHNAR FAMILY 2) OPERATION RICE LIFT 3) PRAY FOR BAHNAR.*

*Thanks again for making such a big difference in the lives of our old, and new friends in the central highlands.*

*..... Mike and Marion"*

## Officers

### Commander

Scott Stone  
(808) 985 8999  
talpan@Interpac.net

### Executive Officer

D.L. "Pappy" Hicks  
(903) 842 3329  
utaldhf@juno.com

### Adjutant and Web Site Administrator

James F. Alkek  
(713) 668 4287, (713) 521 9111  
jalkek@hrti.net, alkek@nieito.com

### Aide

Paul Brubaker  
(304) 567 2227  
paulbru@access.mountain.net

### Registered Agent

Tracy L. Sunderlage  
(815) 334 1850, (800) 330 1850  
pbt419@ais.net, sundsrg@ais.net

### Historian

Jim Davis  
(205) 987 7718  
jimdavis@bham.mlndspring.com

### Archivist

Richard "Dick" Williamson  
(707) 425 2045  
arty@community.net

### Public Affairs/Information Officer

Benjamin J. Youmans  
(813) 782 3317  
c23568@gte.net

### Quartermaster/Logistics Officer

Jack C. De Boer Jr.  
(616) 455 0802  
jcdeboerjr@mail.triton.net

### Locator

Joe West  
(209) 723 5925, (209) 725 6856  
uschl@cell2000.net

### Humanitarian Projects Officer (Vacant)

### Veteran's Association Directory Compiler

Benjamin Myers  
(561) 967 3717  
Vet Locator@prodlgy.net

### Reunion Coordinators

Jon H. "Jack" Frost  
(909) 781 9290

John Desormeau  
(561) 276 2359  
Jdesormeau@aol.com

### Honorary Members-In Memoriam Compiler

W. Michael McMunn  
(570) 321 7102  
mike2@mail.mlcroseserve.net



# COUNTERPARTS SITREP

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Volume II

Issue 4

Spring, 2000

## Commander's Corner

"These are the times that try men's souls," wrote Thomas Paine in and of another era, but the words are applicable today to COUNTERPARTS. Gentlemen, we are in trouble.

We are a moribund entity. By our membership requirements we are never going to grow, unless it is by taking on more associates. We are never going to progress unless more people get involved in managing, to keep a flow of fresh ideas and projects.

As long as I've been in COUNTERPARTS (and I hold Charter Life Membership card 001) I have heard complaints that a small clique of men runs the outfit. As long as I have been CO, (for a year now) I have understood why a handful of the same people are in charge ---- no qualified others will step forward to assume responsibility. It's damned if you do, damned if you don't.

I have been in serious discussions with other officers and members regarding our future. The only surety that has emerged is, we can't go on the way we're going. If we try to do that, the few who work hard at keeping COUNTERPARTS alive are going to grow weary and quit. Then COUNTERPARTS will simply disappear, as it is in danger of doing.

We get little or no response when we ask members to assume an office or a task. We have the XO office open and no one eager to fill it. My term is up in another year and there should be somebody eyeing this job. Adjutant Jim Alkek is doing the work of two men and could use some volunteer help. Ken Jacobsen and Bill Laurie face frustrating obstacles and still get out the SITREP without much help, and do an excellent job. Paul Brubaker is, as we all know, the glue that holds this organization together, and has been all along.

None of us wants to hang on to these positions forever; we'd like to see the work load passed around. None of us is interested in building a "power base" and becoming entrenched.

COUNTERPARTS must change. One way would be to keep our present structure and simply get more work out of our members. Another way would be to retrench, give up our corporate status, devolve into a "brotherhood" or a "club" of like-minded people. This way is workable but I think lessens our stature among our peers.

I didn't become CO of this outfit to preside over its demise. But I put it to you bluntly:

if we don't get more and better participation from the membership, I'm going to recommend to the other officers that we drop the corporation, try to find one man to be an administrator, and become a brotherhood of advisors. We are a bureaucracy, for better or worse, and we need help in keeping this ship afloat. And I won't listen to any members who, standing off and not participating, tell me that my end of the ship is sinking. If you want COUNTERPARTS to continue as a viable organization, then let's hear from you... and let's hear you ask, "how can I help?"

*Tai-Fan*

Scott Stone

# **The Horizon from My Bunker**

**By**

**Paul Brubaker, Aide**

It seems to be human nature that the eternal verities must be periodically relearned. The truisms that "war is hell," that "war never leaves you," that "war destroys the innocence of youth," that "war forever changes you," are cried and echoed throughout history. But history, which has always been the preserve of the victors, only retains its most significant lessons.

The modern Information Age demonstrates most acutely the competition for limited space on the turning pages of history's book. Decisions about what to include and how to represent them are being made as the events occur; the opportunity for revision or emendation passes quickly. The pundits have deemed that the Counterculture was more profound than the Counterinsurgency, and the Health Food Revolution (brown, bland, and boring!) was more vital than the Fast Food Revolution (nuoc-mamn LRRP spaghetti rations!), but the Tet Offensive had more altruism and valor than Woodstock's so-called "Love In" Happening!

If you've read any recent books or seen any current films, then you know that the Vietnam War myths and stereotypes are persistent. The veterans' plaint about "nobody else knows" and "non-combatants don't understand" continues unabated. What most advisors know is that the "other war" is as alien to regular servicemen as the entire episode is to civilians. If society is analyzed, so as to identify causes and isolate effects, to differentiate decline and discriminate disintegration, then the discrete perceptions should generate unique remedies. Regrettably, the solutions are as factional or heterogeneous as their antecedents. The "lost cause" of the Civil War is still being debated, and the Vietnam War may become the "moral watershed" of America's degeneration. In a society where everything is for sale most veterans don't have enough honor to waste, pride to squander, or character to discard.

Truth may be a casualty of war, but it doesn't have to be excluded from history. We can independently "tilt at windmills" and leave a quixotic or ironic inheritance; or we can conjoin and cooperate in our experiential legacy. The bittersweet essence of our shared knowledge is our intimate story, and we can tell it in many ways.

Our primary goal should be to compile an authentic and unexpurgated interservice order of battle. With this as our unified frame of reference, we can accumulate an oral history. Together, these elements will enable the general public to appreciate the role and function of the military and civilian advisors throughout the Second Indochina War. By its nature, such a compilation will represent the position of the "loyal minority" and illustrate its difference. And having sustained our own background, we will validate the contributions and sacrifices of our former Allies and counterparts. Historical persistence logically leads to other worthy programs, such as humanitarian relief, educational assistance, and cultural preservation. If these objectives sound suspiciously similar to those mission statements promulgated in the COUNTERPARTS foundation documents, then we are guilty of consistency.

Implementing such common sense and commonplace goals is equally credible. Just as abilities vary, so actions should also vary; such that participation at every level is an expression of member networking. Not everyone can serve in office or implement a project, but everyone can act as a "living resource" to their community, such that school curricula, library books, and panel discussions are benefited by a veteran's viewpoint. Some can write local editorials and essays, while others can travel to regional conferences and forums. Some can attend meetings or reunions as the "odd fellow" with a different story to tell. Others can volunteer their talent and resources to ensure that projects succeed. Being an "activist" is simply an installment on "paying your dues" because battle teaches us that "enough is never enough."

There is a story about an arrogant student who visits a monastery to display his accomplishments. While being escorted to his interview, the Zen Master pauses to bow to a statue of the Buddha, which act outrages the modern scholar, who declares that such religiosity is old-fashioned, and he spits on such artificial icons! ... to which the Master responds, "I bow. You spit. It's all the same."

The only way to prevent relevant truisms from becoming vapid clichés is to imbue them with dignified respect. Keep the faith!

**COUNTERPARTS 1999 Annual Report**  
**Counterparts, P.O. Box 819, Woodstock, IL 60098-0819**  
<http://www.counterparts.net>

Association Officers

Commander .....	Scott Stone
Executive Officer .....	D.L. "Pappy" Hicks
Adjutant .....	Jim Alkek
Registered Agent .....	Tracy Sunderlage
Aide-de-Camp .....	Paul Brubaker
Locator .....	Joe West
Humanitarian Projects Officer.....	Vacant
Quartermaster / Logistics Officer .....	Jack De Boer
Public Affairs/Information Officer .....	Ben Youmans
Website Administrator .....	Jim Alkek
Co-Editors, The SITREP .....	Bill Laurie, Ken Jacobsen
Historian .....	Jim Davis
Archivist .....	Dick Williamson
Veterans' Association Directory Compiler.....	Ben Myers
Honorary Members-in-Memoriam Compiler .....	Mike McMunn
Reunion Coordinators .....	Jack Frost, John Desormeau

Subsequent to an on-line caucus during the autumn of 1998, Association goals were confirmed, an election organized, and a summary Revitalization Memo (qv) was sent to all members on 22 January 1999 by Paul Brubaker, serving as organizational aide.

This year has seen numerous staff changes, but the most significant has been the loss of former Association Commander Grant McClure from his "labor of love" as Humanitarian Projects Officer, and the closing of our old accommodation address. Grant has changed jobs and relocated; so the HPO post remains vacant while awaiting another highly dedicated member to volunteer.

After many years of devoted service, Joe Cagney retired his law practice, relocated, and assisted our transition to Tracy Sunderlage as successor Registered Agent. Our new permanent address is now coincident with our corporate address, as cited above.

The most important change has been the establishment of our Association website under the direction of Jim Alkek. This dynamic resource serves both members and the general public by offering current postings, reference files, directories, and links to other veteran websites. A selection of useful websites was contributed by Ben Myers, including the directory <<http://www.military-network.com>> of veteran's associations.

Under the supervision of Ray Battreal, several members submitted recommendations for revisions of the by-laws, and these collated suggestions remain in abeyance pending disposition of other revitalization issues.

The history project, including order of battle and chronology, continues its development by Jim Davis, Jim Alkek, Connie Menefee, Neal Henke, and Bob Haines. The project needs continued member participation in both the oral history and bibliographic compilations.

As a result of the out-reach James Elliott extended for his film project, our Association cooperated with Director James Reckner during the 15-17 April 1999 seminar at the Vietnam War Center of Texas Tech University <<http://www.lib.ttu.edu/vietnam/index.html>>. Counterparts has affiliated with the Vietnam War Center for the preservation of historical materials, and plans to sponsor a seminar in the future.

Humanitarian efforts included individual members supporting famine relief in the Central Highlands under "Operation Ricelift," supervised by Mike Little, continuing support of émigrés through Kok Ksor, under the aegis of the Montagnard Foundation Inc.; and the Association's donation of \$1,000.00 for the purchase of medical and relief supplies by Tommy Daniels of Save The Montagnard People Inc. to assist Cambodian refugees.

### **Treasurer's Report for Calendar Year ending 31 December 1999:**

#### **Receipts:**

Rcpts-Membership Dues:	\$199.00
Rcpts-Member Contributions:	\$3,348.13
Rcpts-QM Sales:	\$1,269.00
Rcpts-Bank Interest:	\$ 28.23
<b>Total Receipts:</b>	<b>\$4,844.36</b>

#### **Expenditures:**

Exps-Office Supplies:	\$1,864.66
Exps-Postage & Freight:	\$1,587.65
Exps-Other:	\$30.85
Exps-Contributions:	\$1,000.00
Exps-Corporate Fees:	\$15.00
Exps-QM Merchandise:	\$235.32
Exps-Bank Fees:	\$ 5.95
<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b>\$4,739.43</b>

**Receipts Over Expenditures:      \$104.93**

**Cash In Bank:                      \$8,714.09**

The 1999 per capita operating cost of \$9.98 for 475 total members is offset by the generosity of former BDQ officer Bui Quang Lam in donating all newsletter printing expenses for which we are very grateful.

Members conducted a small informal gathering 11-13 June 1999 in Reno, Nevada to sustain fellowship and to present some awards ... among them being a custom made knife specially engraved to commemorate the continuing contributions of Ben Myers. With the assistance of Joe West, John Desormeau, Ben Myers, Mike George, and Mary Nguyen, the next reunion is being properly scheduled for 30 Sep - 1 Oct 2000 in Orange, California by Jack Frost. The Y2K reunion reservation and agenda details are available in our newsletter and on our website.

For their outstanding contributions to our Association, Certificates of Appreciation were presented to Ben Myers, directory compiler; Joe Cagney, former Registered Agent; and Jack DeBoer, serving Quartermaster. By executive order, Richard R. Burns was designated a Distinguished Member in recognition of his military service and veterans' assistance. Our Association is honored by the presence of these participants.

Respectfully Submitted:  
/s/Raymond R. Battreall  
XO, C/THDNA

## LETTERS TO SITREP

*SITREP readers are encouraged to express their views on the newsletter, COUNTERPARTS matters and other subjects of interest to the organization via mail or email. Letters will be published as space permits.*

### NEWS FROM THE FRONT!

*(The following was received from COUNTERPART Bernie Newsome in Thailand)*

Thurs, Dec 16, 1999

Dear All;

I thought I might share this with you so I've called it: Drama; Thai style at high noon.

Today at lunch time, after buying pork and "sticky" rice I was sitting in my kitchen eating when I heard, behind the kitchen cabinet a heck of a racket. Suddenly, out shot a massive rat, which leapt three foot in the air, hit the deck running and made it to the open drain at the back of the gas stove. (The open drain runs through the kitchen, all the way out to the storm drain at the front of the house) (It's a Thai thing). Don't ask me how the rat got behind the cabinet, the gap is less than 1/2 inch and is located three feet off the floor.

The next thing I saw was a green and brown spotted snake stick its head up above the cabinet and try to get through into one of the bedrooms, but was blocked by a fly-screen. It wasn't big compared to Aussie snakes, just about three foot long and after it found it couldn't get into the bedroom curled up on the window frame, looked at me a couple of times and flicked its tongue in disgust.

I called the office and spoke with our Colonel and asked him what sort of snake it was. Now the story gets interesting. He didn't know, but promised to send down Wirat, a man who works for the King of Thailand. What he didn't tell me was Colonel "Ab" from the Thai Army Military Intelligence was also there and was coming as well, with all his "bodyguards." (Thai MPs).

Now I don't mind snakes, they're good eating when you have no tucker and on a survival course, however, as I've just married a devout Buddhist girl who doesn't believe in killing things, I had made up my mind that this one would not go into the pot. The Thai Army MPs had other ideas.

Wirat identified the snake as a Coconut Viper; not very dangerous to humans, but a deadly rat hunter. I think all the guns, goons and army uniforms scared the poor

bugger cause he went straight down behind the kitchen cabinet again, which is bolted to the wall. If Wirat had not been there and invoked the King's name the Thai Army MPs would have not only blown the cabinet to pieces with all our crockery in it, but also taken out the whole wall. Shit, one even had an Uzi and would have used it. (Don't ask me where they get their guns from, even Colonel "Ab" just shrugged when I asked).

The saga lasted nearly two hours until the snake became totally pissed off with being prodded with coat hangers and other metal objects. It then dropped to the floor right in the midst of the Thai MPs who all tried to kill it with what they had in their hands. (Wirat and I had made them leave their gun arsenal in the lounge room).

The snake got clean away, straight where the rat had gone, but in the ensuing melee two Thai soldiers sustained; one deep cut on the arm from a bayonet and the other a slash on the face from a coat hanger. Wirat, Colonel "Ab" and myself pissed ourselves laughing. It was a great day's entertainment and just goes to show that the Thai Army are always willing to fight, try and kill and be wounded in "battle."

I am now waiting for someone from the Thai Army CGS to contact me to fill in the citations.

Regards,  
Bernie



*Background on the end of the Vietnam War*

December 23, 1999

While I was XO of 4th Regt, USMC Tacs, then-COL Alexander Haig was DEPCOM. After a run-in with COM, BG Bernard Rogers, Haig gave me a pertinent lesson on the care and feeding of Rogers.

Much later when I was C/S of the Army Advisory Group in Viet Nam, GEN Haig appeared at the MACV Command Mess. The other generals present ignored him because of their perception that, as Kissinger's Aide, his had been a "political" promotion. I figured that I owed him one and invited him to join me for a few drinks and dinner.

At dinner, he explained to me that he had been sent to twist Pres Thieu's arm and get him to sign the Paris Peace Accords; something he was reluctant to do because

they allowed the NVA to remain in South Viet Nam. Haig explained to me that he had promised Thieu that, if he signed on, we would maintain his combat power on a one-for-one basis: i.e., if he expended an artillery shell, burned a gallon of fuel, dropped a bomb, lost a tank, or whatever, we would replace it. Further, he had promised that we would watch the NVA closely and bomb him to smithereens if he did any more than one-for-one replacement. Thieu accepted this offer, and all was well until President Nixon resigned.

In the meantime, all MACV personnel departed, leaving only the Defense Attaché's Office behind. I ended up as SJS, US-SOUTHCOM, in Panama where I had the DAO's quarterly report sent to me. After Nixon's resignation, Sen. Kennedy was able to cut off the purse strings, shouting "No more money for bloodshed," thereby rendering all previous bloodshed in vain. The DAO's report subsequently praised the Vietnamese Joint General Staff for their astute management of chronic shortages. This resulted, however, in a situation where a Popular Force platoon attacked by an NVA battalion could receive only two volleys from their supporting artillery (two 105mm howitzers) without the personal approval of the Corps Commander. The Armor force which I had helped build was not allowed to sweep their areas to prevent NVA buildups but could only respond to such buildups on the Corps Commander's order. And ten entire squadrons of the Vietnamese Air Force were grounded for lack of spare parts! Thus it became possible for the NVA to amass overwhelming force, resulting ultimately in the fall of Saigon. (From information in the DAO's reports, I had predicted the South's collapse the November before it transpired.)

I pass this on as ammunition you may use the next time someone criticizes our efforts in VN.

"The things that will destroy America are prosperity-at-any-price, peace-at-any-price, safety-first instead of duty-first, the love of soft living, and the get-rich-quick theory of life."

...Theodore Roosevelt

## Voting Tally for COUNTERPARTS Executive Officer

After determination of a legal quorum (10% full members voting), the following results are announced:

Robert O. Haines	26
D.L. "Pappy" Hicks	114
James F. Alkek	1
Paul L. Brubaker	1
void/invalid ballots	4

By this tally, the new COUNTERPARTS Executive Officer is D.L. "Pappy" Hicks; who is hereby installed to office effective 1 March 2000 for a three year term, to perform duties as prescribed by the C/THDNA constitution and bylaws.

The cooperation of all participants is appreciated. Congratulations to Pappy, and welcome to the "command post", where the work is hard, the pay is awful, but we try to have fun doing important things!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Paul Brubaker

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### New Public Affairs/Information Officer

Ben Youmans has taken on the job of COUNTERPARTS Public Affairs and Information officer. Ben can be reached at (813) 782 3317 or c23568@gte.net

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### SITREP Editorial Policy and Procedures

#### Copy:

- Articles, letters and other news items are welcomed from all members and other subscribers. Copy should be typed double spaced using standard manuscript fonts like Courier, Cobb, or other "plain vanilla" fonts that can be easily OCR scanned.
- Electronic submissions via email or on disc are also welcome. Microsoft Word or Word Perfect is preferred.
- Submissions should not exceed "Column length" pieces, i.e.: no longer than 600-800 words. Members shouldn't hesitate to send short (50-100) word contributions. Remember, brevity is the soul of wit.
- Photos or pictures can be submitted by mail or on the internet. For Internet material use one of the standard graphic formats like JPEG, TIFF, MIX, or GIF.

#### Editorial Policy:

- We will edit for grammar, spelling and clarity. If we feel the need to edit for length or content we'll contact the author whenever possible. We will NOT edit for political or philosophical content unless it's obscene, illegal, or libelous.
- SITREP will be published quarterly, in January, April, July, and October. Deadlines for manuscripts and photos are the first of the month before each publication month, but we can be flexible if there's late breaking news.

#### • Send Submissions To:

Ken Jacobsen  
655 North Sterling Drive  
Charleston, SC 29412  
email kjacobsen15@home.com  
Tel. (843) 795 7519

Bill Laurie  
1462 West University Drive  
Mesa, AZ 85201  
Tel. (602) 962 4347

# Vietnam Vets Without Hollywood, Without Tears

By William K. Lane, Jr.

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Movies about Vietnam are the latest phase in Hollywood's nonstop assault on the American spirit. The films are often accompanied, in the print media and on TV, by advice from Vietnam veterans groups, "outreach" organizations, and the like, that we who fought in that conflict should see these movies only with a "support group." One organization advised us not to see "Platoon" alone; another cautioned us to spend time "decompressing with friends after it." We've been told about the danger of "nightmares" and warned of the ultimate horror: "flashbacks". Jane Fonda, our dart-board version of World War II's Betty Grable, claims she and a group of veterans "wept" in a theater-lobby after seeing the movie.

Excuse me while I barf.

This ludicrous blubbering and psychobabble has puzzled me for 17 years. Every unveiling of a Vietnam memorial on TV news seems to star the same two central-casting vets wearing fatigues—both bearded, one with pony tail—hugging each other and sobbing. It's embarrassing.

The other image is created by the cultural termites in Hollywood: the American soldier in Vietnam as racist, neurotic, drug crazed, feral, a hopeless pawn of a rotten society sent to fight an unjust war. Even the cartoonish Rambo character is a societal misfit, a mumbling killer exorcising his demons in a revenge ritual.

The vast majority of men who fought in that war—people like me—simply do not fit any of those images. Many of us are embarrassed by them, especially in the presence of veterans of Iwo Jima and Midway and Pork Chop Hill—most of whom saw much more horror than Vietnam soldiers ever did and managed to continue their lives without whining, acting nutty, or looking for a free ride.

This is not to say that Nam was not a searing experience. Indulge me as I present some images I dredged up in an attempt to stimulate a few "flashbacks."

I arrived in Vietnam in early 1968, as green as the beret I wore, and was assigned to the Special Forces "A" team that had the dubious distinction, two weeks later, of being one of the first attacked during the Tet offensive. My memories of that battle are of the incredible roar and chaos that occurs when two rifle companies open up on each other; of a day and a night pinned down behind tombstones in a Buddhist cemetery; of picking up a terrible sweet smell for the first time and knowing instinctively that it was death.

I remember an old French priest who insisted I follow him during a lull in the battle because he wanted me to see a "bullet" in his church. The bullet turned out to be a howitzer shell that had come through an open window and embedded itself in the steps of the altar without exploding. We got "the bullet" out for him when things calmed down a week or so later, but I do remember genuflecting as I left the church in awe, and then going back to the grim work.

I can still see the terror in the eyes of the North Vietnamese prisoners brought before me. I was the first American they had ever seen, tall and blond (then), and undoubtedly going to kill them. They nearly collapsed in relief when I handed each of them a few of my Luckies and told them, "No sweat."

I remember the exhilaration brought about by extreme fatigue and our victory over the North Vietnamese regiment that had invaded our area. And I recall the curses, the hatred we felt when the *New York Times* clips arrived claiming the Vietnamese and American victory in the Tet offensive was actually a defeat.

There were other vignettes that haven't faded: A boy in a nearby village with a twisted foot caused by a badly-healed break. We begged his mother for months to let us take him into Nha Trang and have it fixed. Finally she relented, tearfully, not quite trusting us. Our medic sneaked the boy into an American hospital under care of a doctor who was part of our conspiracy. We gave him back to his mother, in a cast, with a leg as good as new. The whole village got drunk with us.

We got drunk on Thanksgiving Day as well, after the giggling Vietnamese told us the "deer" we had eaten with them for Thanksgiving dinner was actually a dog.

I remember trying to cram a year of good times into a week of R&R in Singapore, and then landing back in Vietnam at the air base, hung over and depressed, only to be mortared in the terminal.

But many of the starkest of memories are the bad ones. A newly married lieutenant dead after less than a week in the country, a sergeant killed in a firefight when another American shot him accidentally, piles of dead North Vietnamese, dead South Vietnamese, dead Montagnards, a dead old man in his bed in a house wrecked by battle: heat, fear, concussion, the frenzy of fighting out of an ambush.

Bad things, but no worse than many other bad things in life; car wrecks, the death of loved ones. Being fired probably can be as traumatic as being fired upon. And besides, Nam was a long time ago.

I still know where a few of my teammates are. I get a few cards at Christmas. Sometimes I see one or two and hear about others. Some did a few more tours in Nam after I left. A couple are still in the Army. Some have done better than others, but I'll bet you this: None of them would need a "support group" to go see a movie. None of them would indulge in prattle about "post-traumatic-stress disorder" and how it caused them to beat up their wives or wet their beds. None of them would be part of the Agent Orange hustle.

And none of them would go to an Army-Navy surplus store and buy jungle fatigues and put them on and hug each other and cry for the cameras because no one gave them a parade.

The men I knew in Vietnam didn't hate each other because of race. We weren't on drugs. We didn't murder civilians. We didn't hate the Army or LBJ or our country. We didn't feel America owed us a free ride because we spent time defending it. We were our own "support group" over there. We don't need one here.

I've met hundreds of Viet vets over the years, and I've yet to encounter one who fits the prevailing stereotypes. There are veterans from all our wars who are sick or depressed or drug addicted, and by all means they deserve our help and comfort. Those who were legitimately disabled deserve a special, revered status in our society. But can't we stop the fictional stereotyping that simply doesn't fit the majority of Vietnam veterans?

Some of the bravest and best men that ever wore an American uniform fought in that war. They deserve better than to be caricatured by Hollywood and represented in the media as a legion of losers.



## BOOK REVIEWS

Reviews of books, new and old, relating to the Southeast Asia experience. Members are encouraged to submit reviews. All reviews will be published as space permits.

*Why didn't You Get Me Out?* Frank Anton, Frank Anton, 730 Palm Drive, Satellite Beach, FL, 32937. \$20.00

Anton's experiences as a VC POW in SVN and Hanoi. Good account of life in a VC prison camp. Anton describes the maniacal fanaticism of the VC guards and camp cadre, and offers some thoughtful recollections of Bobby Garwood, who was in Anton's camp. Anton also comments on fellow POW's who formed a "Peace Committee" in Hanoi, and expresses reservations about US resolve in addressing POW/MIA matters. Well worth the read.

...Bill Laurie

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*Tan Phu; Special Forces Team A-23* Leigh Wade. Ivy Books, 1997.

Account of 1963 experience at a remote SF camp in the Southern Mekong Delta. The book mentions Member-in-Memorial Dick Rowe, camp XO, who was later to spend five years in a VC POW camp in the U Minh Forest.

...Provided by Paul Brubaker

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*Soldier Under Three Flags* H. A. Gill III, Pathfinder Publishing 458 Dorothy Avenue, Ventura, CA 93003.

Biography of Member-in-Memorial Larry Thorne (AKA Laurie Torini), who fought Russians in Finland in 1940, and later emigrated to the US and joined the Special Forces. On his second tour Thorne was on a MACV SOG "Shining Brass" mission in 1965.

...Provided by Paul Brubaker

*The Black Book of Communism; Crimes, Terror and Repression* Stephane Courtios, et al, Translated by Mark Kramer, Harvard University Press. \$37.00.

This book was published in France in 1997 and caused immediate controversy, mostly because Courtios, the book's Chief Editor, concludes that Communism was no better than Nazism and that Leninist regimes were essentially criminal enterprises.

Courtios and the other historians who edited the book support these conclusions with numbers: 25 million murdered in Russia during the Lenin-Stalin era, upwards of 65 million in China under Mao Zedong, millions more in Cambodia, Africa, Europe and Latin America.

Using this and other evidence the authors do not hesitate to indict virtually every member of the Communist Pantheon. The sheer magnitude of the horror demonstrates that Communism itself, with its belief that the end justifies the means and its iron dictum that all opposition must be ruthlessly destroyed, is malignant at heart.

It's not surprising that this book has enraged the European left, which continues to insist that Communism, despite its murderous history, is fundamentally humane. Future historians may consider this odd blindness of Western intellectuals as one of the great political mysteries of the 20th century. Hopefully, the rest of us will not forget what a narrow escape we had from defeat by the forces of Communism.

...Ken Jacobsen

"We were wise indeed, could we discern truly the signs of our own time; and by knowledge of its wants and advantages, wisely adjust our own position in it. Let us, instead of gazing idly into the obscure distance, look calmly around us, for a little, on the perplexed scene where we stand. Perhaps, on a more serious inspection, something of its perplexity will disappear, some of its distinctive characters and deeper tendencies more clearly reveal themselves; whereby our own relations to it, our own true aims and endeavours in it, may also become clearer."

.....Thomas Carlyle

## COUNTERPARTS ORAL HISTORY

**COUNTERPARTS** members are invited to share their own in-country experience. Your work doesn't need to be a literary masterpiece; we will edit for grammar, spelling and clarity. Your submissions can be handwritten, typed, or sent via email. Each issue, we will publish as many items as space permits.

### John C. Owens : A Recon Mission Never To Be Forgotten

After my first tour in Vietnam where I was assigned to MACV Advisory Teams 70 and 91 in Binh Duong sector as a team radio operator, I ETS'd and went home to attend college. Ten months later, the Tet offensive happened and I re-enlisted in the Army for Special Forces training. After completion of training and Vietnamese Language School at Fort Bragg, I returned to Vietnam as an Sp/4 assigned to the 5<sup>th</sup> SFGA. After a couple of months in-country, I volunteered for MACVSOG-CCN in Da Nang. Because of my prior Vietnam service, I was assigned to be the US advisor on Recon Team North Carolina, a Vietnamese team with a Vietnamese paratrooper sergeant. In early October, 1969, our team was inserted in Laos for a recon mission.

We landed on a hilltop, scrambled out of the chopper and put as much distance as we could between us and the LZ. We then moved quietly and slowly for the next hour or so. When darkness began closing in we set up our RON (rest-over night) position. I then began trying to make contact with the C-130 Blackbird plane that patrolled the Laos and Cambodian areas for SOG teams on the ground. While I was doing that, my counterpart and the other team members quietly fanned out to set up claymore mines in front of our position.

My counterpart had walked out approximately 20 meters when he stepped on a "toe popper" mine that blew his left foot off. The noise was deafening and our wounded comrade was screaming from the pain. I walked out as close as possible in the same direction my counterpart had and picked him up, covered his mouth, and carefully retraced my steps back to the tree. I signaled everyone to set up their claymores where they stood and to move back to the tree using the same route they had used before. We then covered our position and ourselves with branches to hide us. I told the next-in-charge counterpart to do medical care on our wounded comrade. I now had to make contact with anyone because our position was compromised and we were in a minefield.

I was on the radios all night (PRC-25 and a USAF survival radio) trying to make contact, but to no avail. Our wounded comrade was on morphine, but his mouth had to be covered whenever we saw enemy troops who were looking for us. They searched for us all night, but never found our position.

Finally at dawn, our morning FAC pilot made contact with us and I informed him in code numbers what our situation was. The FAC pilot pinpointed our position and in an hour, choppers and gunships were above us. We had to use our STABO rigs (parachute harnesses sewn onto web gear with leg straps to make a one-piece extraction device) to be pulled up through the trees on ropes attached to the helicopters so we dangled underneath the chopper until it got us to the nearest Allied base. The first chopper came in and picked up our wounded comrade and three of the team members without any trouble except getting everyone through the trees quickly.

While the second chopper was coming in to pick up the rest of us, the enemy started yelling and moving towards our position. I made sure everyone was hooked up, and was hooking up myself when the enemy started shooting. The chopper pulled us up through the trees, but I had time only to hook up one of my "D" rings to the rope. While the chopper was climbing up out of range, I was spinning on the rope and slipping out of my STABO rig. I grabbed the rope and the other team members grabbed for any part of me they could hold. It seemed like forever that I hung like that, underneath the chopper. We finally got to a base in Vietnam where we could land to get inside the chopper to continue our trip back to FOB1 at Phu Bai. When we arrived at FOB1, we were told our wounded comrade's tourniquet had come off his leg while being pulled up through the trees. He had bled to death on the flight.

Other missions followed, but I never forgot my #1 counterpart.

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### Tucker Smallwood: Moonlight

My memories of thirty years past are clouded by age, revisionism and all that I now know to be true...but if memory serves me well, it was a typical July night in the delta, and this, a typical ambush patrol. On my five man team, we alternated each night, either accompanying one of the ambush patrols of the units we supported...or remaining at our base and pulling two hour shifts of radio watch through the night. It was my turn to lie in wait, along a canal, inside a tree line, behind a paddy berm, or in tonight's case, within a Buddhist cemetery which fronted a broad expanse of open field along one of Charlie's favorite infiltration routes from Cambodia east to Saigon.

It had been a relatively quiet week with no major operations or engagements but the routine was important to maintain, both for ourselves and our allies. We'd left base in the late evening, with enough light to maneuver to our initial rally point, then

waited for the total darkness of the delta night to move into our final ambush position. Our patrol consisted of perhaps eight soldiers of the Regional Force Company we supported and myself. SOP suggested two advisors on each mission, to insure that one might call for assistance if the other were incapacitated, but I'd long since foregone that luxury. We'd been shorthanded for some weeks. First a replacement for a new XO, ( I had become commander three weeks into my tour) was slow in coming. Then I had found it necessary to relieve my medic, DOC....such a good man, but personal problems and an ill-fated R&R (in Hawaii, his wife demanded a divorce) had reduced him to a shell of his former self, relieving his grief in alcohol and downers - and medics were hard to come by, they were such a critical element of our five man team. Since I was by then fluent and comfortable alone with my people, I often gave one of us a good night's sleep by pulling a solo ambush stint.

Cemeteries in the delta were much like those in New Orleans, built up, with monuments and small constructions above the water line of the delta fields, providing some cover....if you could get past the attendant ghosts. I'd never REALLY believed in ghosts before Vietnam...not really. Oh sure, like most kids, I read the books and saw the movies and enjoyed being scared. But there were enough real life horrors in combat to fill any normal persons mind; the horrors of everyday life made the ghost stories of Boy Scout campfires rather trite and childish. But many of the Vietnamese people in the villages and outlying areas believed strongly in spirits, those of natural elements, their ancestors, and of less benign entities. After months among the people in the countryside, I too began to sense the presence of others as we moved through the night— not of the VC, for that was a very different chill or itch—but of something that belonged there in the same way that I did not. I was the interloper, and as comfortable as I became with night operations, this odd presence never allowed me to be fully at ease, which was probably a good thing.

That night we had no expectation of encountering a VC force of any size but one never knows, and as always I had preplanned artillery on call as well as gun ships and Spooky and Tac Air, if we needed them. We crept into our positions, set up claymores and I checked our fields of fire. We were all seasoned hands and I trusted each man on this patrol to do his job and remain alert till we pulled out, just after first light. It had taken us a bit longer to take up our positions because the moon was quite bright, full as I remember it, and any overt movement could be seen for some distance. I lay beside a raised tomb, did a quick comm check with my team member on radio watch and settled back to wait. Imagine a four poster bed, the sides perhaps 18 inches high on all four sides, the body within entombed but above the water level of the surrounding land. The cemetery itself was perhaps a square of 70 feet per side....a small city of ancestors in the middle of nowhere surrounded on all sides by rice paddy. In the distance, perhaps a Klick away, the paddies gave way to thicker bush and nipa palm and to our north, a canal.

I remember at some point rolling over on one elbow and gazing up at the bright moon overhead. Miles from any ambient light, delta nights were remarkable in their clarity of night sky. I'd never before or since seen the heavens so clearly defined, constellations as they were drawn in star charts, undiminished by smog or cloud or ground light. It seemed to me rather remarkable that at that very instant, there were two very distinct and meaningful realities afoot. Above,us, fulfilling a promise JFK had made years before, two Americans had traveled to the Moon and were about to set foot on that luminous orb floating high above me. Below I was engaged in something ancient, elemental and somehow antithetical to the progress the moon voyage implied. For I was laying in wait to kill another human being.

My experiences in Vietnam were rife with the contradictions and duality of existence, but never so clearly as on that night. This, I thought, was the Alpha and Omega of human existence. Our science had allowed us to visit the moon and walk on it...and yet some things had progressed not at all, for one man taking the life of another had existed before we stood upright.

We encountered no one on that moonlit night, probably a night too bright to encourage any infiltration. And while I took great pride in our units' willingness and capacity to punish Charlie for his incursions into our AO, I was not particularly unhappy at our lack of success that particular night. Somehow it seemed right.

### *REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE*

**“Dear Counterparts:**

**My father was a 25th INF Advisor during Vietnam. I believe he was attached to the 2/46th ARVN unit during 66-67? , Team 86 & 99. That is what his papers say.**

**Anyway, I have two photo albums full of photos of the men he served with. And, as my dad was an artist, I have his field sketch book of his time with this unit. There are faces here that I have memorized. I would like to contact them, If I could, or their families. Also, I am looking for ThieuTa Bui Van Vein, his counterpart from that tour. Please visit <http://members.aol.com/JD2813/Dad.html> “The Greatest Man I Never Knew”and see the first tour link. I need advice on the best way to do this.**

**Thank you,  
Jen Branch Denard  
Proud daughter of Cpt Bill Branch**



# BULLETIN BOARD



## **RED HAT/Team 162 Reunion**

VN Airborne reunion to be held 15-18 June, in Arlington Virginia at: Quality Hotel, Courthouse Plaza, 1200 Courthouse Rd, Arlington, VA 22001. Reservations 1- 888 987 2555. Ask for Red Hat Reunion 2000. Most attendees are expected to be VN and US counterparts, but Red Hat Secretary Fred Brander welcomes all *COUNTERPARTS/THDNA* member, airborne or not. Reservations must be in by 15 May. For more information contact Fred Brander, 626 Greenwood Ave, Clarksville, TN, 37040-3716.

## **Knife Raffle**

The winners of the TET 2000 Knife Raffle are: Grand Prize-Engraved Counterparts Knife ; JC DeBoer Jr from Wyoming, MI. Counterparts Lapel Pins ; W Coviello from Meriden, CT and R O'Hare from Powhatan, VA. Congratulations to our winners & thanks to all members who purchased tickets!

## **Laos Veterans**

I got a call from General Vang Pao to go to DC again 10-13 May. If anyone who has been to Laos is in the area, tell them to get in contact with me. No one can miss us, especially on 11 May. If schedule is not changed, we'll be out on the Mall, not far from the Vietnam War Memorial. We put a wreath there every year.

...Pappy Hicks

## **Locator Request**

**Mark Moyar**, author of *PHOENIX* and *THE BIRDS OF PREY*, one of the few objective looks at the PHOENIX program, is working on another book and would like to contact advisors or counterparts who were at the battle of Ap Bac. He is specifically interested in contacting James Scanlon, Robert Mays, and Arnold Bowers. Mark Moyar can be reached at 4821 W. 228th St. Fairview Park, OH, 44126, Tel. 440-734-6871.

**Steve Sherman**, VN Vet, author and compiler, has quarterly staff rosters for MAVC from 1965-1973 and will provide them to anyone who will compile a chronological list in accordance with duty functions. Anyone interested contact Steve Sherman at [greenberet.net/books](http://greenberet.net/books).

## **Military Alumni**

BEEN LOOKING FOR SOMEONE OR SOME MILITARY ORGANIZATION? The listing of military associations/alumni now has a NEW ADDRESS: <http://www.military-network.com> Check the organization's for people you are looking for. Check and see if your organization or association is listed. Looking for history of a unit, check the listing for the Point-of-Contact.

## **United States Commemorative Medals.**

*Medals Of America, Inc.* offers Commemorative Medals and other U.S. Military Awards and Insignia for those eligible. 1-800-308 0849 for catalog or Web Store [www.USmedals.com](http://www.USmedals.com)



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## **Useful Web Sites**

- **The American Experience: Vietnam Online.** Companion site to PBS series on the war.  
[www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/amex/vietnam](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/amex/vietnam)
- **The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall.** On-line version of the memorial.  
[the-wall-usa.com](http://the-wall-usa.com)
- **Vietnam History and The Vietnam War.** History. Sources for info not always cited  
[www.vwam.com/vets/hisintro.html](http://www.vwam.com/vets/hisintro.html)
- **The Vietnam War Internet Project.** University sponsored project to expose as many points of view as possible.  
[www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/shwv/vwiphome.html](http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/shwv/vwiphome.html)
- **Vietnam Women Veterans.** Contributions and role of women in the war.  
[www.spencergroup.net/vwv](http://www.spencergroup.net/vwv)
- **Vietnam Veterans Home Page.** Tributes to lost soldiers, info on reunions, links to other sites  
[www.vietvet.org](http://www.vietvet.org)

## **Counterparts Speak**

“Sir, this is my last day in Vietnam and I want you to know this: at Tet, when we met the North Vietnamese, they were better equipped than any American Division, and we beat the hell out of them. This Division has met the threat as it has developed and done more and better than any division in the country.”

*...Maj., Michael Ferguson, CoVan to 1st ARVN Div. responding to a reporter. The Reporter's research later concluded that the 1st ARVN Div. produced performance that no US or ROK Division could match.*

“If the press judges them (ARVN Soldiers) harshly at times, it would be well to remember that they have not had their independence very long....we were once inadequately equipped and poorly trained and professional soldiers came from afar to aid the fledgling American army in it's fight for freedom... We must and we can win here. There is no backing out of Viet Nam, for it will follow us everywhere we go...”

*...From a letter home by Capt. James. P. Spruill, U.S. Army, killed in Action, 21 April, 1964.*

## MEMBERS IN MEMORIAM

### **ADMIRAL ELMO R. ZUMWALT**

COMNAVFORV 1968-1970, Chief of Naval Operations, 1970-1974. From the time he arrived in-country until he left for Washington for his new assignment as CNO, Admiral Zumwalt's energy and drive produced an uninterrupted flow of new initiatives. He pushed his floating bases into areas like Camau, long controlled by the VC, and increased the pace of coastal and riverine operations throughout the country. Zumwalt also did much to increase the prestige of Naval Advisors, and greatly improved the quality of operational and logistic support given to the advisory effort.

Admiral Zumwalt worked closely with his counterpart, Admiral Tran Van Chon, and initiated projects to provide decent housing for VNN sailors and improve VNN training and logistic support. During the last year of his tour Zumwalt presided over the Navy ACTOV (Accelerated Turnover to Vietnam) program.

During the fall of Vietnam Zumwalt tried desperately to get Admiral Chon out of Vietnam and keep him from North Vietnamese persecutors. Although his efforts were unsuccessful, he did sponsor Admiral Chon's successor, Admiral Cang, and took Cang and his family into his own home.

As a result of his son Elmo III's death from Cancer, Admiral Zumwalt became a strong activist in the Agent ORANGE investigation and later described this struggle in his book, *My Father, My Son*.

Admiral Zumwalt was a tireless friend and supporter of his former shipmates. Until his death in January, he was Chairman of the Vietnam Center's National Council and took an active interest in the Center's work.

### **MEMBERS IN MEMORIAM UPDATE**

Crash site investigation recently conducted may have produced identifiable remains of Larry Thorne. (See review of *Soldier Under Three Flags*, p.9 this issue) The recovery party was joined by US Ambassador Peterson, the Finnish Ambassador to Hanoi, Thorne's nephew, and author Karl Kallonen. Mike Eiland, SF Association, buried an SF Challenge coin at the excavation site. Elsewhere, Clyde Sincere and Charlie Norton flew to Finland to attend the 80th birthday observation for Thorne and former members of his recon company, the *Osasto Tornii*.

### **MAJ WILLIAM DEAN, SSG ELBERT BUSH**

The recovered remains of MAJ Dean and SSG Bush, team 162 (Airborne) will be interred at Arlington on 14 April. Both were shot down in a helo near Quang Tri in 1973.

## MEMBERS IN MEMORIAM

### **PFC JERROLD SWITZER, USMC (POW/MIA)**

CAP member. On March 18, 1968, PFC Switzer tried to save the lives of Vietnamese children who were being swept out to sea in the Quang Ngai river, Quang Ngai Province, and was himself drowned. His body was never recovered.

### **SGT. THOMAS P. KINDT, USMC**

NCO of CAP unit in Kim Lien village near the Nam O bridge. His unit was overrun on 21 September, 1966. His son Tom, who was two years old when SGT Kindt was killed, is seeking info on this action. Contact Tom Hubbard, at leda@ime.net or at (207) 874 0102.

## **Richard Rezac's Advisor Painting Series**

**By  
Jim Alkek**

Richard Rezac has begun reviewing photos submitted by *COUNTERPARTS* members. He noted that there are not many submissions from SF members. We will need to commit to a total of 100 pictures for Richard to cover his costs. The price of each lithographic print from a painting will be \$200-250 for the limited edition numbered series, \$300-500 for an Artist's Proof (edition of only ten numbered copies). A custom print made by Giclee' reproduction technique will cost \$2,000 (limited edition of 250 copies.) Artist's Proof of the Giclee' in an edition of 10 will be sold for \$3,000 each.

The commitment of 100 Lithographic prints is to cover costs of the painting and printing of the lithographic prints. We are trying to use this solution to avoid putting an initial burden on the organization. After the first 100 prints have been sold, *COUNTERPARTS* will receive a portion of subsequent sales of prints and Giclee' reproductions. An Original Artists Proof Giclee' reproduction would also be donated to *COUNTERPARTS*.

Each print and painting will be accompanied by a certificate of authenticity, numbered, signed, and dedicated to the individual buyer.

We had decided on a series of 4 paintings to cover the meaning and essence of the *COUNTERPARTS* organization. After just viewing the photos once I see that the subject is vast enough to warrant the 4 paintings, at least.

The "By the Stream" painting was created from 6 separate photographs that had been taken with a box camera and was originally in black and white. His painting "Troubled Waters" was taken from 4 separate photos.

Richard will use as many of our photos as possible to build meaningful scenes that will represent different aspects of our advisory duties. He has requested more photos from SF and Ranger teams since only a few have been received to date.

Mr. Rezac, who was a member of the 77th SF Group, may be reached at:

**REZAK DESIGN, INC.**

**HC2 BOX 1036-30 TURNER TRAIL, LAMPE, MO 65681**

**TEL. (417) 779 5391, email rjrezac@inter-linc.net**



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Administrative Section



Security Section

### GVN Police Insignia



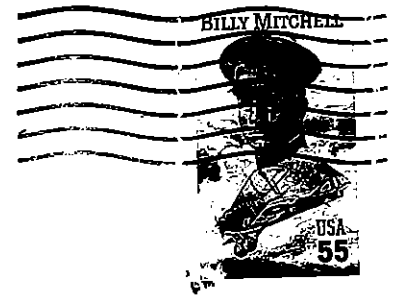
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